

Appln. No. 09/965,723
Amendment dated November 25, 2003
Reply to Office Action mailed October 23, 2003

REMARKS

Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Entry of the above amendments is courteously requested in order to place all claims in this application in allowable condition and/or to place the non-allowed claims in better condition for consideration on appeal.

Claims 7 through 19 remain in this application. Claims 15 and 16 have been cancelled. No claims have been withdrawn or added.

Paragraphs 1 through 4 of the Office Action

Claims 8 through 15 and 17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Staagen (USPN 6081958).

Claims 8 through 9 and 17 through 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Bean (USPN 2988049).

Claims 8 through 9 and 17 through 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Wiest (USPN 2795808).

Claim 8, particularly as amended, requires "wherein said securing means comprises a strap having a first end and a second end, said first end being attached to a first side edge of said gripping member and said second end being attached to a second side edge of said gripping member" and "wherein said strap comprises a resiliently stretchable material".

It is submitted that the patents cited in the rejections of the Office Action would not lead one of ordinary skill in the art to the combination of requirements of claim 8, especially the requirements set forth above.

Withdrawal of the §102(b) rejections of claims 8 through 15 and 17 is therefore respectfully requested.

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Paragraph 7 of the Office Action

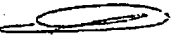
Claims 7 and 19 have been allowed.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing amendments and remarks, early reconsideration and allowance of this application are most courteously solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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